

U.S. Embassy to the Holy See 20th Anniversary Conference A Call to Action: Joining the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons

June 17, 2004

The Pontifical Gregorian University

In light of a shared moral responsibility to help the millions of people who are bought, sold, transported, and held against their will in slave-like conditions, *“A Call to Action: Joining the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons”* brought together international experts in the field of human trafficking to discuss how churches, faith-based organizations, the media, and others can contribute to efforts to defeat this scourge. Through lectures, discussion, and video, the conference proposed and analyzed avenues for expanded international cooperation for battling this 21st century slavery.

The victims of human trafficking number in the millions each year. They are often the poorest and most defenseless members of the human family. This horrific phenomenon now rivals drug and arms trafficking as one of the most lucrative criminal enterprises in the world. Human trafficking has also become one of the greatest affronts to human dignity the world has ever seen. The United States has been in the forefront of international efforts to combat this crime, and the U.S. Embassy to the Holy See has been active in promoting awareness and developing initiatives to prevent it.

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Conference Agenda:

Welcome: Father Franco Imoda, S.J., Rector, The Pontifical Gregorian University

Opening Remarks: H.E. Jim Nicholson, U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See

Session I: Trafficking in Persons: The Holy See's Perspective

Speaker:
Monsignor Pietro Parolin
Under-Secretary for Relations with States, The Holy See

Session II: Faith-based Initiatives to Combat Trafficking in Persons

Moderator:
H.E. Gerhard Westdickenberg
Ambassador of Germany to the Holy See

Speaker:
Sister Eugenia Bonetti, M.C. and Mr. Stefano Volpicelli
Italian Union of Major Superiors (USMI) and International Organization for Migration (IOM)

Mary Ellen Dougherty, SSND
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Migration and Refugee Services

Session III: Confronting the Demand Side of Trafficking in Persons

Moderator:
H.E. Désiré Koumba
Ambassador of Gabon to the Holy See

Speaker:
Donna M. Hughes
Professor & Eleanor M. and Oscar M. Carlson Endowed Chair in Women's Studies, University of Rhode Island, USA

Dorchen A. Leidholdt, Esq.
Founder and Co-Executive Director, Coalition Against Trafficking in Women

Lunch Session: *Screening of award-winning feature film “Lilya 4-Ever,” which has shaken the world with its devastatingly powerful view into the dark world of human trafficking. Film in Russian with English subtitles.*

Session IV:

Video Screening: TV Tackles Trafficking in Persons

This session presented excerpts of dramatic TV news pieces recently broadcast on NBC Dateline, CNN Presents, and CBS News/Miami. These video pieces served to introduce Session V.

Speaker:

H.E. Ambassador Jim Nicholson

Session V:

The Media’s Role In Promoting Public Understanding and Action Across Borders

Moderator:

H.E. Archbishop John P. Foley
President, Pontifical Council for Social Communications

Speaker:

Michele Gillen
Chief Investigative Reporter, CBS News/Miami

Sylvia Poggioli
Senior European Correspondent, National Public Radio (NPR)

Lecturers

Monsignor Pietro Parolin was born in Schiavon, in Vicenza province, in the north of Italy. After his ordination as a Catholic priest, he took up graduate studies in Canon Law and Diplomacy. He entered the Holy See's diplomatic service in 1986. Monsignor Parolin has served at the Holy See Nunciatures in Nigeria and Mexico. He also served as Country Director for Spain, Andorra, Italy, San Marino and Concordat Issues at the Vatican's Foreign Ministry. He speaks Italian, English, French, and Spanish. In 2002, Monsignor Parolin was appointed the Holy See's Under-Secretary for Relations with States.

Sister Eugenia Bonetti, M.C., is responsible for the anti-trafficking initiatives of the Italian Union of Major Superiors (USMI), a body encompassing all female religious orders in the country. In 1997, she attended a postgraduate course at the Missionary Institute of London, affiliated with the Middlesex University. She was awarded an MA in Applied Theology (Peace and Justice Studies) after completing a year's worth of research on the complex issue of human trafficking in Europe. She has committed herself to fighting the exploitation and injustice suffered by trafficked women – something she has seen firsthand over her 24-year career as a missionary in Kenya, then as coordinator of anti-trafficking strategies in Turin, and now in Rome. She and her “team” of some 200 sisters throughout Italy, working full-time in anti-trafficking initiatives, have opened their homes to provide shelter, security and care to hundreds of victims of trafficking. Sr. Eugenia has spent a great deal of her time working with nuns in Nigeria, encouraging their own local efforts in the most remote and poorest communities to prevent trafficking and to assist in the rehabilitation of repatriated victims. Under the leadership of Sr. Eugenia, the sisters of USMI's anti-trafficking sector have also been successful in helping detainees enter rehabilitation programs in Italy. Sr. Eugenia's experience has been critical in the formulation of a U.S. Embassy-sponsored project to provide anti-trafficking skills and strategies to groups of religious sisters in Italy, Nigeria, Albania and Romania – in partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The U.S. Department of State recently recognized her work in its annual Trafficking in Persons Report naming her an anti-trafficking heroine.

Stefano Volpicelli earned a degree in Political Science at the Università degli Studi “Statale” di Milano where he later served as Assistant Professor. In addition, Volpicelli received a Post Graduate Diploma in Health Sociology at the Università degli Studi di Bologna. He has coordinated various programs that have dealt with countering human trafficking and has continually supervised training of religious personnel in Italy as well as in Albania, Romania, and Nigeria to identify and combat human trafficking. He has coordinated programs that have brought a greater awareness to worldwide issues including HIV/AIDS and drug use. His extensive commitment to the prevention and awareness of sexually transmitted diseases has led him to work with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and to support initiatives against STD's in the Balkans, Africa and Europe. He has attended numerous meetings, conferences, and seminars abroad relating to these topics and has written articles on such issues published in Italy and elsewhere. He also served as a member of the Italian Institute of Health's National Focal Point for HIV/AIDS prevention among migrant populations.

Mary Ellen Dougherty, SSND, represents Migration and Refugee Services at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) where she has helped lead the USCCB's efforts to combat trafficking. In addition to coordinating many USCCB anti-trafficking projects, Sr. Dougherty has given lectures, written articles, and coordinated national conferences on the issue. Prior to joining the USCCB, Sr. Dougherty was the chair of the English Department at the College of Notre Dame in Maryland. Since 1977, she has served as a college writing instructor for prisons in Illinois and Maryland. She also works with disadvantaged women through a community service project, helping to prepare them to enter the job market. Sr. Dougherty is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Maryland Association of Continuing Education Award for her work with prison inmates.

Donna M. Hughes is a Professor and holds the Eleanor M. and Oscar M. Carlson Endowed Chair in Women's Studies at the University of Rhode Island in the United States. She has been involved in community work, education, and research on violence against women and sexual exploitation. She is an internationally known scholar, researcher and activist on trafficking of women and girls for prostitution. She has completed research on trafficking for prostitution in the United States, Russia, and Ukraine. Dr. Hughes was a research consultant to the Council of Europe on the use of new information technologies in the trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation. She has testified for several congressional hearings and published numerous papers and reports on trafficking and prostitution that are used by researchers and NGO personnel worldwide.

Dorchen A. Leidholdt, Esq. is Co-Executive Director of the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW) in New York City, an umbrella structure for grassroots organizations around the world that she helped found in 1988. She has represented the Coalition at numerous meetings and international conferences. For the last ten years she has served as the Director of Sanctuary for Families' Center for Battered Women's Legal Services, the largest dedicated provider of legal services to domestic violence victims in the United States. An activist and leader in the feminist movement since the mid-1970s, Ms. Leidholdt teaches "Domestic Violence and the Law" at the Columbia University School of Law. She holds a Master's degree from the University of Virginia and a law degree from New York University School of Law. Ms. Leidholdt's writings on sex trafficking include CATW position papers for the UN Special Seminar on Trafficking, "Prostitution and the Global Sex Industry," and "Prostitution: A Contemporary Form of Slavery," a CATW Presentation to the UN Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery. Ms. Leidholdt is the recipient of numerous prestigious awards.

Michele Gillen is a 21-time Emmy Award-winning investigative journalist who has served as both anchor and reporter on network and local television news programs. Currently, she is Chief Investigative Reporter at the CBS-owned and operated television station in Miami, Florida, WFOR-TV. She is the recipient of the prestigious Alfred I. DuPont-Columbia Silver Baton Award and the Edward R. Murrow Award for investigative reporting. In April 1998, Michele was chosen, along with Oprah Winfrey, Jane Pauley and Rosie O'Donnell, as recipient of the distinguished Gracie Allen Award for outstanding individual achievement, presented by the Foundation of American

Women in Radio and Television. Michele was honored as the investigative reporter in the nation whose work most contributed to helping American women.

Sylvia Poggioli is senior European correspondent for National Public Radio's (NPR) foreign desk and reports from Rome, Italy, the Balkans, other parts of Europe, and the Middle East. Poggioli can be heard on NPR's award-winning newsmagazines *Morning Edition* and *All Things Considered*, and others. Since joining NPR's foreign desk in 1982, Poggioli's on-air analysis has encompassed the fall of communism in Eastern Europe and the turbulent civil war in the former Yugoslavia, and noteworthy coverage from Prague. In early 1991, she supplemented NPR's Gulf War coverage, reporting from London on European reactions to events surrounding the war. In 2002, Poggioli received the Welles Hangen Award for Distinguished Journalism from Brown University. In 1994, Poggioli was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences "for her distinctive, cultivated and authoritative reports on 'ethnic cleansing' in Bosnia." Poggioli's reports on the Bosnian conflict earned two awards in 1993, and shed light on rape as it was being used as a weapon of war.

U.S. Embassy to the Holy See 20th Anniversary Conference

A Call to Action: Joining the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons

Opening Remarks
as prepared for delivery by
Ambassador Jim Nicholson

June 17, 2004

Thank you for being with us this morning for this second conference in our series of conferences marking the twentieth anniversary of diplomatic relations between the United States of America and the Holy See.

“As unimaginable as it seems, slavery and bondage still persist in the early 21st century. Millions of people around the world still suffer in silence in slave-like situations of forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation from which they cannot free themselves. Trafficking in persons is one of the greatest human rights challenges of our time.” This is from the State Department’s just-released **Report on Trafficking in Persons**.

Two years ago many of you were here in this same hall at the Gregorian for our first conference on 21st century slavery – the human rights dimension of human trafficking. We are back here today because there can be no let up in the fight against trafficking. We must continue to build on the efforts of governments, religious groups, private organizations, and courageous individuals such as Sister Eugenia Bonetti, from whom we will be hearing, to confront this horrendous 21st century evil.

Free nations that respect human rights and defend human dignity must keep the scourge of trafficking in human beings high on the human rights agenda. President Bush has made this one of his top priorities, which is why he spoke out strongly against human trafficking during his speech at the United Nations General Assembly last year. Describing it as a humanitarian crisis, the President told the world that victims of trafficking see little of life before they see the very worst of life – an underground of brutality and lonely fear. He insisted that those who create these victims and profit from their suffering must be severely punished, and warned that those who patronize this industry debase themselves and deepen the misery of others. The President concluded that the world must now show “new energy in fighting back an old evil.” “Nearly two centuries after the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade, and more than a century after slavery was officially ended in its last strongholds, the trade in human beings for any purpose must not be allowed to thrive in our time,” he said. Our gathering today is part of that international commitment to stop human slavery.

I'm glad so many of my colleagues from the diplomatic corps are here today. U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, spoke on Monday at the release of the State Department's *2004 Report on Human Trafficking* – a report that reviews the dimensions of this problem in over 140 countries. The Secretary emphasized that trafficking in human beings is a global problem, and that no country is immune from its scourge. Trafficked human beings either come from our home countries or end up enslaved in our home countries. No one can say with honesty that his or her country is not tainted by this 21st century slavery. Our time together today manifests our desire to free our countries of this blight.

A couple of weeks ago we celebrated the 60th anniversary of D-Day. This event, along with other Allied landings, marked the beginning of the liberation of Europe from the grip of Nazism. As heirs of that freedom I think we have a moral obligation to remove the shackles that today keep hundreds of thousands – perhaps millions – of men, women and children from enjoying their freedom. To quote from Secretary Powell again, “We fight trafficking in persons not just for the sake of the victims and potential victims of these crimes, we do it also for ourselves because we can't fully embrace our own dignity as human beings unless we champion the dignity of others.”

I am especially pleased that we have with us today Monsignor Pietro Parolin from the Holy See's Secretariat of State, Cardinal Martino from the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. The Holy See has been a powerful and consistent voice against modern-day slavery in the international community. Pope John Paul II's message is clear. He believes that “the trade in human persons constitutes a shocking offence against human dignity and a grave violation of fundamental human rights.”

Two years ago we concluded our conference here at the Gregorian by committing ourselves to action. Since that time, my Embassy has been in contact with the Holy See's nuncios around the world, providing them with the report of our 2002 conference and urging them to make contact with officials responsible for anti-trafficking at U.S. embassies in their host countries. The responses we have received so far are encouraging – many have written to us expressing their eagerness to join this fight and some have taken up contact with our Embassies to explore potential collaboration. We hope that they will also work with us to bring the commitment and resources of local Bishops Conferences to bear on this issue.

The United States has come to realize that faith-based communities are key agencies in the fight against trafficking. President Bush, in particular, has recognized the value of strengthening the partnership between the government and those faith-based and community groups that provide compassionate care and produce impressive results. He firmly believes that these organizations have an essential role to play in combating social evils such as human trafficking. You will hear this morning some fine examples of how faith-based communities – communities of religious women, Bishops Conferences, and others – can become key players in anti-trafficking initiatives by working in partnership and with the guidance and support of international organizations and governments.

As a former businessman I know all about the elements of supply and demand. It is useless to offer a service or a product that no one will pay for. And that is why we wanted to explore the demand element of trafficking during our conference today. The criminals responsible for trafficking in persons are not just those who recruit the victims and ship them overseas. The criminals are also those whose demands make trafficking a lucrative business – the so-called entrepreneurs who want low-cost labor for their

factories; homeowners who want cheap maids and babysitters and gardeners; surgeons and their patients who do not care where a donor organ may come from; and, the men who willingly pay to sexually exploit women and children. We'll hear later from two experts in the area of demand, and ask ourselves how individuals can so willingly turn a blind eye to the inhuman slavery of their victims.

It would be too depressing if we looked at the evil of trafficking without hope. Indeed, there are many good people committed to anti-trafficking work. Many are here today. There are also many good news stories about people who have been rescued from slavery and who enjoy their newfound freedom, and have the hope of new job skills or the opportunity to own a small business. Communities of religious women and men are taking victims into their facilities to offer them shelter, protection and hospitality. Filmmakers and media organizations are also increasingly coming to grips with this issue and are taking risks to bring to international attention to the plight of trafficking victims and the nefarious ways of the traffickers. Later today we will see and hear about how the media is working to raise awareness of this issue, exposing both its horrors and its heroes, and we will discuss how television, radio and print media can continue this work.

Again, I want to thank all of you for coming, it is a sign of your concern and it gives us further reason to be hopeful.

Now I would now like to introduce our first speaker: Monsignor Pietro Parolin, the Holy See's Under Secretary for Relations with States. Monsignor Parolin is known to many of you as a strong supporter of human rights. My embassy worked closely with him during the crisis that led to East Timor's independence and we have greatly benefited from his wisdom and insights on issues affecting human dignity in every corner of the world since he took on his role as Undersecretary. Monsignor Parolin spoke out strongly against trafficking at last December's OSCE meeting of Foreign Ministers in Holland describing it as a "shameful trade in slaves." We look forward to his reflections today as we begin to consider ways that religious communities, governments, media, and individuals can take action to defeat this scourge.

A Call to Action: Joining the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons

Address by Monsignor Pietro Parolin

Under-Secretary for Relations with States

It is a pleasure to take the floor and an honour to express the congratulations and best wishes of the Secretariat of State for today's initiative, which follows on from the international conference of 15-16 May 2002 entitled "21st Century Slavery – The Human Rights Dimension to Trafficking in Human Beings." That conference was attended by the then Secretary for Relations with States, Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, who brought a message from the Holy Father as a sign of the "utmost personal interest" of His Holiness John Paul II and of his "encouragement" to study the despicable phenomenon of the trafficking in human beings and the most suitable ways of combating and eradicating it.

We should therefore be pleased to have today's opportunity to again tackle the problem of trafficking in persons – a shameful phenomenon that continues to plague humanity and a grave violation of human rights – by seeking above all concrete and effective responses, through the contribution and collaboration of churches, religious organisations, means of social communication and other social groups. Our thanks go to the United States Embassy to the Holy See, which together with the Pontifical Gregorian University has promoted this conference.

The fundamental reference in this sphere is the **dignity of the individual**, a dignity that comes directly from God, the creator of all, man being created in His image, something that no one can take away. This dignity is trodden upon and denied when the person is subjected to humiliation, abduction, deceit, fraud, coercion and violence, even concealed murder. Women and children and, in general, all those living in a state of poverty, can become the victims of a trade causing wounds to the body and to the spirit that do not close. Labour exploitation in its most dangerous forms, prostitution, pornography and paedophilia, the removal of organs, illegal adoption of children and youngsters: these are the most common destinations of this trade, something that our world, and even affluent western societies, has not managed to defeat.

It is estimated that there are at least 800,000 victims each year, mostly persons below the age of 24. In central and western Africa alone some 200,000 youngsters are involved, often sold by their own families and forced to perform heavy labour, sell their body or sign up with armed groups.

If we look at the roots of the phenomenon, there can be no doubt that the foremost factor for pushing the victim into the hands of "slave-drivers" is **poverty**. The problem of trafficking cannot be adequately tackled without coming up with responses to the problems of discrimination, underdevelopment and economic and social degradation still affecting whole nations.

Governments and the international community, aware – as the Pope pointed out in the cited Message – that "trafficking is a serious threat to the security of single nations and a pressing question of international justice," are adopting regional and sub-regional

measures and integrated global measures to prevent and combat the phenomenon, which is often tied up with the trafficking of drugs and arms, people smuggling and the mafia, and to protect victims.

On this point we should recall that on 29 September and then on 25 December 2003 respectively the **UN Convention against transnational organized crime** and its **related Protocol** came into force, designed to prevent, suppress and punish the trafficking in human beings, in particular women and children.

Another important sign, going in the same direction, was the appointment of a **Special Rapporteur** on *“trafficking in persons, in particular women and children”* decided last April during the 60th session of the UN Commission for Human Rights in response to the appeal made by the acting High Commissioner at the beginning of the same session.

As regards regional initiatives, worthy of special mention, I believe, is the second regional Ministerial Conference on illegal trafficking in migrants, trafficking in persons and related transnational crime, held in Bali, Indonesia, on 29 and 30 April 2003, and the 8th regional Conference on Migration (Puebla process) staged in Cancún, Mexico, on 29 and 30 May of the same year.

On 2 December 2004, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the member states of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe adopted a Plan of Action in Maastricht and a specific mechanism for combating trafficking in persons. On that occasion I had the honour of leading the delegation of the Holy See, which as you know, is a fully-fledged member of that organisation. Being well aware that the dignity of human beings was “at stake,” the Holy See felt obliged to firmly support these initiatives, stressing during the Plenary Assembly that the measures in question had the merit, among other things, *“of favouring closer and more intense cooperation among Agencies involved in the countries of origin, transit and destination of the victims”*.

The above shows that, within the international community, the issue of trafficking in persons is a very topical one. This leads me to a further reflection: the excellent initiatives promoted are undoubtedly very useful and appropriate, yet they are still insufficient.

What is essential is the **perseverance of political will** to implement the documents adopted and, irrespective of the many existing obstacles and conditioning, to take into serious consideration the sad scenarios of impunity and corruption that facilitate the trafficking in persons, sometimes involving the administrative and judicial authorities themselves, diplomatic personnel and emigration and border police forces.

It is also important to bear in mind that efforts to combat this trade are not only a question of public order and security, nor one of the struggle against illegal immigration, although one should recognise that forward-looking legal immigration policies have undoubtedly yielded good results, also with reference to this scourge.

Finally, one should acknowledge that human rights are coherent and indivisible. Courage is needed to deal with the demand side of these “new slaves.” One should ask about the values intrinsic to the social fabric of the countries of destination. On this point, victims must be assured of criminal, civil and administrative legislation that protects them when escaping from their oppressors, giving evidence in court and attempting to start anew a healthy and dignified life. These are measures that must not

1 Taken from Joliana Bielica in “La Croix”, 9 February 2004.

be viewed merely as acts of indulgent benevolence. A cultural commitment is required in a society that favours the disintegration of family ties and sometimes the suppression of life, and tolerates violation of the dignity of women and children for despicable ends, while it professes to seek their freedom and progress.

Here an important contribution is made by **voluntary organisations** and **Christian associations**. In numerous countries – a long time before the intervention of State Authorities – Catholic institutions raised the problem of trafficking and set up assistance and victim protection networks coordinated at a national level. These Catholic institutions were thus the real pioneers of programmes that have often been taken up at an administrative level, with or without their subsequent contribution. Some Catholic organisations are moreover qualified and expert government advisers with regard to the drafting and implementation of legislation in this area. Just to give one example, in the United States, after the approval of the **Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act** in the year 2000, 200 of the first 300 women identified as victims had been identified following reports from Catholic institutions. Such examples of collaboration between civic and religious institutions for the good of more vulnerable members of society are to be encouraged.

This is in particular a challenge thrown down by modern-day society to **men and women religious**. A challenge to be taken up not only as a personal choice but also as a task assigned by the institutions they belong to, and often a choice in keeping with the original charisma. Men and women religious often find themselves on the “front line,” having to take care of victims and perform a range of actions, offering logistical, healthcare, psychological, legal and spiritual assistance. Those directly involved would be able to tell you much more about this than I am able to. Often in silence and in very risky situations, they go about their work painstakingly, complementing the action of public institutions and adding the dimension of closeness to the victim, something that a public official cannot always provide. Solicitous support for the training and action of religious personnel directly engaged on this front – such as that given by Ambassador Nicholson, with the cooperation of the International Organisation for Migration and the Unione Italiana delle Superiore Maggiori – will produce better preparation for actions and better results.

I would like to add a few thoughts about the role of the **mass media**. Some time ago, in a French newspaper, I read the following reflection about trafficking in persons: “...*in the Balkan region criminal elements are the only ones not to feel the ethnic tensions.*”¹

It is now terribly clear that this trade makes use of the latest means of communication and information which – also with reference to criminal acts – are so easy to use yet so difficult to control!

In light of the above, it can be appreciated why, during the preparation of the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, the Holy See forcefully requested that the Declaration of Principles should preserve the paragraph on the ethical dimensions of the information society, with the aim of stressing the need for the media to always respect human dignity, in particular protecting the more vulnerable members of society. The crime of trafficking, now conducted “online,” should be countered by the “online” work of those able to help prevent and combat it. Fortunately, promising initiatives are already under way in this area, among other things helping to inform and shape public opinion.

The Role of Religious Orders in the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons

Sr. Eugenia Bonetti

Consolata Missionary Sister

Introduction

Your Excellency Mr. Nicholson, U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, I am grateful to the organisers of this conference for inviting me to share my personal experience in the fight against the trafficking in human beings, mainly by helping victims to break their “Invisible Chains” thus regaining their lost identity, dignity and freedom. I wish also to highlight the commitment and the role of 250 women religious belonging to 70 different Congregations who are presently working in Italy, answering to the emergency of thousands of immigrant women, lured, imported, enslaved and exploited on our streets.

A New Missionary Call: A Personal Experience

I am a Consolata Missionary Sister. After 24 years spent in Kenya, working with children and youth in schools and with women’s groups in Parishes, in 1993 I was asked to return to Italy for a new missionary challenge: to work with immigrant women in the city of Turin.

There in a Caritas Drop-in Centre, for the first time, I met a Nigerian woman enslaved by the “sex industry” and my missionary life changed drastically.

Maria was 30 years old and the mother of three children, left in Nigeria. She came to Italy, hoping to get a job to help her family, instead she was thrown on the street, a victim of the new slave trade that started to emerge. Maria was sick, but being in Italy illegally, she had no right for medical treatment; therefore she asked assistance from a charitable organization.

At that time I had no knowledge of the new phenomenon of thousands of young women being exported, like commodities, from poor countries to meet the demand of a well-off society, where everything can be sold and bought, even the body of a young girl who could not give voice against it. Maria helped me enter into the complexity of the “world of the night.” Gradually I came to understand the mechanisms of trafficking and traffickers, taking advantage of the poverty and lack of education in many countries of origin, entrapping and exploiting so many victims for lucrative gain. Moreover, I heard the cry for help of these victims and came to understand their deep suffering and humiliation in being forced to become “prostitutes”. As a woman and as a missionary, I felt offended and indignant to see the life of so many young people, dreaming for

a better future, destroyed for futile interests. I felt the need to join other voluntary organisations in the fight against sex exploitation that stripped women of their identity, leaving them completely empty. In a special way, I joined with other women religious who have been moved by such circumstances to open the “holy doors” of their convents to hide and protect women running away from their tortures.

A Brief History of the New Italian “Slave-Trade”

The phenomenon of immigrant women from developing countries “imported” to Italy for the “sex industry” started in the early 1990s. Since then the number of women working mainly on the streets of our towns and villages, in a dehumanised condition, has been steadily on the increase. Italy’s geographical position offers slave-traders several possibilities to bring in ‘women for sale’ to satisfy the great demand of millions of consumers.

Early on, some Catholic organizations, such as Caritas and Religious Congregations, took notice of the phenomenon because some of the girls running away from their traffickers asked them for help. Several convents and Caritas centres accepted the challenge and the risk of the unknown by taking the girls in, hiding them within their walls. At the beginning we met with many difficulties in assisting the victims – such as the language barrier, cultural differences, moral issues, public opinion and legal status. Very soon, by listening to their dramatic stories, we came to understand that their work as prostitutes – “the oldest profession in the world,” as many people refer to it — was not a choice they had made. No. What we were faced with was a horrible and new form of slavery. This situation was challenging our values, our mentality, our tradition and our security, asking for immediate answers. Some female congregations responded positively with a prophetic intuition by providing shelters, language courses, training skills and job opportunities for the victims they encountered. In this new environment, victims were also helped to heal their deep wounds caused by the dehumanising experience. They were helped to regain their sense of self-worth, trust and hope. A major obstacle however remained – the legal aspect. Having no documents, the women could not claim any legal rights.

In 1996, with courage and determination the Union of Major Superiors in Italy (USMI), with the Italian Caritas and a few other NGO’s, approached several women parliamentarians to highlight the phenomenon of trafficking. Together we lobbied for a new ad hoc legislation for **Prevention, Protection and Prosecution**. Article 18 of a Legislative Immigration Decree No. 286, dated July, 25 of 1998, crowned the efforts of collaboration between government and NGO’s. In this regard, Italy to date is the only European country that has granted legal status to victims with a **residence permit** aimed at a full reintegration into society.

The conditions for women to benefit from such a programme are:

- To be a victim of violence, exploitation and/or forced into prostitution;
- To be willing to leave prostitution and ask for help, either from the local police authority and/or from NGO’s;
- To be ready to cooperate with the authorities by denouncing criminal organizations;
- To be in danger of further violence, because of the testimony given;

- To be willing to go through a social rehabilitation programme, mainly in a protected shelter where victims receive a permit to stay and work and a passport issued by their respective embassy.

On a case-by-case basis, the programme could be stopped in the event that the applicant for legal status does not comply with the above requirements.

Since Article 18 has been implemented, every year, between six- and eight-hundred women have benefited from the programme and were granted legal documents, which allowed them to be fully autonomous.

The Slave-Trade: Women and Minors for Sale

These days, only in Italy can we speak of figures between 50,000 – 70,000 young women – mainly from West Africa, Latin America, Albania and more recently, from Eastern Europe – that are involved in this slave trade. Of these, about 40% are minors, between the ages of 14 and 18. As they are in Italy illegally, it is difficult to have exact statistics as to their number, age, origin and movements.

On the competitive sex market, African women are considered second-class, because they are “black” and do not speak Italian. They are not educated and they are less youthful and slim, therefore they get a lower price for their services. For a routine affair in a car they agree to \$10-15; whereas the Eastern Europeans will earn \$25. For the girls to pay back their debt – which runs as high as \$40,000 – \$60,000 – contracted with the new traders who have recruited them and brought them to Italy, they must undergo, at least, 4,000 acts of sexual intercourse. In addition to this initial debt, they have to meet monthly expenses: \$100 for food, \$250 for lodging, \$250 for the work site (a stretch of pavement), as well as clothing, transport and various personal needs. To repay their debt, they have to “work” every day, or every night, seven days a week for not less than two – three years.

On arrival in the destination country, the women’s passports or documents are seized with the promise of returning them after completing the debt payment to the slave-traders. Unfortunately, documents, which are often forged to begin with, are never returned. As a result, women remain persons with no identity, no name, no status, and no nationality. They gradually lose the sense of who they are. This applies mainly to Nigerian girls who are also subjected to “*voodoo rituals*” (black magic), undertaken in the presence of the witch-doctor before leaving their homes and travelling to Europe.

The women can cross several countries before reaching their final destination in Europe. They can pass through Greece, Russia, Bulgaria, Holland, Germany, Spain and France, travelling for weeks or months over land, by air or sea. In the case of many Nigerian women today, they cross the Sahara Desert because documents are no longer needed to do so.

For the girls from the East, the network often tricks them into bogus engagements and promises of marriage. They are controlled by men who manipulate their emotions. On the other hand, the Nigerian victims are entrusted to “*maman*”. These are Nigerian women, who turned from being exploited into being exploiters. They teach the new recruits how to work the streets, control them, collect the earnings, parcel out the stretch of pavement where they are to work, punish them in case of resistance, and above all, they keep them subjugated through the “*voodoo rites*” which exert a terrible psychological violence on the victims. Yes, this is women exploiting women!

The Risks of the Streets

The “prostitutes” must live in absolute secrecy and in strict obedience to their traffickers and *mamans*. In addition, they are liable to the dangers of street maltreatment, abuse, road accidents and even death (I know three girls who were badly burnt while warming themselves around the fire at night.). Annually, hundreds of girls experience martyrdom on our streets, either from clients, or from maniacs or from traffickers (Glory, a 22-year old girl was killed by a client who fell in love with her.). Many die in the course of their exhausting journey, or simply disappear. Other women become pregnant during their journey of being trafficked, with some children being born in the desert. Many times I wondered how such young people can bear so much suffering!

There is also the risk of contracting HIV and AIDS: 10-15% of women working the street test HIV-positive. They face unwanted pregnancies, followed by forced abortions. Women from Eastern Europe have an average of three abortions each. For African women, who hold maternity as the highest value, abortion represents not only the killing of a new life, but also of a culture. Among African women, cases of mental illness are frequent as they suffer from fear stemming from *voodoo rituals*, and reprisal against their families back home.

On the street the prostitute completely loses her psycho-physical identity, her personal dignity, her freedom of choice. She comes to consider herself an object, a thing, a piece of merchandise. She must live as an illegal, a social and cultural outcast, with only one option open to her – to demand payment for a sexual encounter – yet keeps none of her earnings.

From Victims to Citizens: Women Religious Promoting Women

Once aware of the complexity of this “21st-century slave-trade,” in constant evolution, the Italian Religious who initially responded to this ministry with simple means, later felt the need to be better organized and to have a specific professional formation. To implement the requirements of the new Italian legislation, they had to respond adequately to the government’s demands and move into networking with other organisations. Our specific role was still rehabilitation and reintegration of victims: putting their lives back together. This is a delicate ministry that requires human and spiritual qualities of touching and healing the wounds, an unconditional love expecting nothing in return, the capacity to listen and understand, without judging or condemning, allowing time to change and to grow, respecting their freedom of choice, ready to face even failure and disappointment.

In Italy, 250 Sisters from 70 different Congregations are providing such help to the victims of human trafficking. They work through 110 structures and offer the following type of assistance:

- ✓ **Outreach Units** for a first contact with the victims on the streets, giving information about alternative solutions to coercive prostitution. (Elisabeth, 6 months pregnant, was contacted on the street and helped to escape this way.);
- ✓ **Hotline Telephone** – a 24-hour service in all the regions of Italy which has been set up to answer immediate calls for help: **800.290.290**;
- ✓ **Drop-in Centres** – to deal with women who call in/search for help;
- ✓ **Sheltering Communities** – there are about 100 small shelters, run by sisters who

offer hospitality to 6-8 persons at a time for 6-12 months, or longer if necessary. They concentrate on the victims' human, social and spiritual re-integration. Many communities also welcome mothers with children or pregnant women, to protect them and to safeguard the gift of a life about to be born. The Community becomes a family for these young women. In it, they feel welcomed, loved, understood and supported in their difficult journey of social re-integration;

- ✓ **Professional Training** with language and professional courses;
- ✓ **Restoring Victims to Legality** – assisting victims in the acquisition of documents;
- ✓ **Pastoral Ministry** – to help victims to rediscover their faith; almost all of them come from Christian families and have a strong sense of God and also a sense of guilt;
- ✓ **Temporary Detention Centres** – for two years now a group of ten Religious of different nationalities has visited a Temporary Detention Centre in Rome to offer religious, moral and psychological support to women waiting for mass expulsion. Found with no documents, they are kept in the Centre for a maximum of 60 days before being sent back to their countries of origin, in total despair, empty-handed and labelled as “prostitutes”;
- ✓ **A Working and Reflection Group of the JPIC** (Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation) is formed of male and female members of international Congregations to counteract trafficking in human beings. This group has recently prepared a kit with information and a training programme in four languages: English, Italian, Spanish and French. It is one of the best means of raising awareness among religious communities, seminaries, schools, parishes and various youth groups.
- ✓ **A Training Program for 85 Religious**, proposed by the U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See, Mr. Jim Nicholson, financed by the United States Government, and organised by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in collaboration with USMI and UISG, took place in Rome, Nigeria, Albania and Romania from January to May 2004. Women Religious in Poland held a two-week session for 24 sisters, organised by International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC). The formation courses are important means of communication and collaboration with countries of origin to make sisters aware of the problem and of the need for them to get involved in the work of prevention and reintegration of victims who return home broken, disappointed and sick.

Cooperation with Religious Women in Countries of Origin

Our role and our intervention for women in **countries of destination** cannot be incisive if it is not in strict collaboration with the local governments, churches and with the religious communities in the **countries of origin**. In the past few years, we have established channels of cooperation with the Conference of Religious in Nigeria and we have already obtained noteworthy results in prevention campaigns, family tracing, and assistance for returnees (either on a voluntary basis or forcibly deported).

Thanks to the above-mentioned courses of formation for Religious, we have initiated contacts with some Conferences of Major Religious Superiors in Eastern Europe, such as Romania, Albania and Poland, and we hope to establish contacts of exchange and collaboration with religious of other countries of origin to hit the problem in all its forms.

We Particularly Feel the Urgency of:

- helping religious congregations in countries of origin face the emergency of mass repatriation and supporting victims with financed projects;
- creating an authentic network with religious in Eastern Europe;
- organising meetings with all women's religious groups working in different parts of Europe. This will allow us to meet, confront, share our projects, study new strategies of intervention and stimulate strong legislative positions against trafficking and the traffickers;
- urging the Episcopal Conferences of the countries involved in "trafficking" to assume their responsibility and denounce this social scourge;
- involving male religious congregations who, as of today, are still absent in this fight. Their service would be very important for the formation of young people to the values of respect and relationship, but mainly for the contact and rehabilitation of the "*consumers*"... *men*;
- offering full collaboration to all public and private forces, lay and religious, that work in this sector towards a common effort of crushing the "trade" forever;
- collaborating with the mass media to ensure the distribution of accurate information about the problem;
- keeping contacts with the Monasteries, asking the support of their prayers, knowing that, "*If Yahweh does not build the house, in vain do its builders toil*" (Psalm 127, 1);
- giving attention also to the client who, with his constant demands, supports and increases the paid-sex market. The client himself is a victim of the consumer system of our society. We are called to join forces to form and to inform, to recuperate the values of reciprocal respect, of inter-personal and family relations, to find once again balance and harmony, mainly in the man-woman relationship.

Conclusion

I want to conclude my presentation with a prayer in which we ask Tina, a 21-year old Romanian girl, who was killed on the street in Italy, to forgive us because we are all responsible for her death as for the death of many other young girls, victims of human trafficking of the invisible chains. Tina, forgive us.

A Counter-Trafficking Training Proposal for Religious Women

Stefano Volpicelli

IOM International Organization for Migration

IOM is very pleased and excited to have been entrusted with the design and presentation of a training program for religious personnel, because we realize that a great opportunity to reinforce the already existing anti-trafficking program is within reach.

Today I have the honor of presenting the curricula of the training to you and then highlighting the outcome. I'll begin by explaining IOM's objectives and approach to dealing with the problems manifested by trafficking and why religious personnel play a role in this pluralistic strategy. Then we'll take a look at the development of the curricula before exploring the curricula itself. Finally, I will highlight participant response and raise a few of the issues sustaining the phenomenon of trafficking.

In regard to trafficking, IOM's primary objective is: "to curtail migrant trafficking and to protect the rights of migrants caught up in the practice"

To meet this objective, IOM carries out practical programmes in six major areas of operation. These activities are carried out in countries of origin, transit and destination, and in close partnership with governments, NGOs, other International Organisations and other concerned parties. These six areas of anti-trafficking programme action are:

1. Victims' protection, return and reintegration activities: In co-ordination with partners, IOM provides shelter and assistance for victims of trafficking. In addition, IOM offers assistance for voluntary return and reintegration to trafficked migrants;
2. Counselling and medical support;
3. Information dissemination and awareness raising: to make potential migrants aware of the risks of irregular migration and trafficking;
4. Technical co-operation and Capacity-Building: IOM provides training to increase the capacity of governmental and other institutions to counteract trafficking;
5. Research and information gathering: IOM undertakes research to focus attention on the problem of trafficking;
6. Seminars and forums: IOM organizes seminars and forum activities in order to share experience amongst the various partners, disseminate results from research, co-ordinate/harmonize policies and measure and create formal and informal networks dealing with the issue.

IOM, as anybody else, cannot carry out these activities alone and, indeed, a valuable source of support is the assistance offered by religious personnel. However, as my colleague Sister Eugenia has commented, this vital assistance is intuitive rather than methodical. That is to say, many nuns attempt to confront the challenges posed by

trafficking by selflessly offering their skills, generosity and spirituality; nevertheless, if they can be given the opportunity to hone their practical skills, they can better assist at-risk women and girls. Otherwise, the stress of attempting to tackle an unfamiliar problem can put psychological balance and even physical health in jeopardy.

This program's inclusion of religious personnel has therefore been an innovative opportunity not only because it professionalizes the contributions of religious women but also because it vividly illustrates and harmonizes the different contribution of religious congregations with local and international representatives of civil society.

Now, I'd like to discuss how we moved from the conceptual phase to the practical. Considering the sensitivity of the topic, we began by making arrangements for preliminary consultations with the partner agencies Italian Union of Major Superiors (USMI) and Italian Union of Superior General (UISG) as well as with Fondazione Migrantes, in order to present the project and develop a plan of action. The same agencies (along with the U.S. Embassy to the Holy See) were asked to join a steering committee, a collegiate body formed to follow, agree on, and validate the subsequent project phases.

The second step was to set up a team of experts for the development of the training curricula. Bearing in mind that the training course would have to meet the specific expectations of nuns both from countries of origin and destination, it has been designed to include as many issues related to trafficking as possible.

Methodologically speaking, when designing a training course one must consider that there are two different levels of communication: one is rational; the other is emotive.

The more the two areas of communication are carefully considered, the more the trainees are comfortable with the process and therefore are able to maximise their learning capacity.

For instance, the emotive side is usually stimulated by example/metaphors linked with the background of the trainees. For this reason a set of metaphors, based on the Holy Bible, the Social Doctrine of the Church and the Pastoral Religious documents have been associated with the training contents. The emphasis on the former has the capacity to improve the comprehension of the latter.

The training curricula was organized in seven "folders", from the general to the particular, that is to say, from the society to the individual. Now we can take a closer look at the content and objects of the folders:

Folder 1. In this folder, the roots of the phenomena of trafficking, its dimension and response from international and local institutions along with civil societies worldwide is addressed. In particular the training, starting from the explosion of women's migration, focusing on both aspects of trafficking – labor and sexual exploitation – calls attention to the fact that trafficking denotes more than sexual exploitation. It is a violation of basic human rights and must not be linked with prostitution. While prostitution is often a choice, though a desperate choice resulting from lack of opportunity, sexual exploitation is a violation representing the most despicable form of exploitation. To clarify, the risks of the female migration process as a whole must be tackled not only prostitution. First, in countries of origin, men and women alike – and particular attention must be paid to women since they are often marginalized – require more opportunities than they currently enjoy. Second, women from the South don't migrate North without reason; they are responding to the market's demand. The invisible hand

has gestured Northbound where there is an increased demand for caregivers such as nurse assistants, nannies, and housemaids, the traditional duties of women that Western women can't or don't want to do anymore. We could therefore make the argument that migration and trafficking are linked to the natural and legitimate need for women's emancipation and, as a man I can admit, lack of male ambition to pick up the slack.

Folder 2. Based on operational experiences and statistics from the IOM anti-trafficking team, the profile of the victims is a story of abuse, deprivation and violence that push young women to seek hope elsewhere, despite the risk. Traffickers are well aware of this desperation and exploit the natural desire of individuals to improve their lives.

Folder 3. The third folder concerns health risks related to trafficking, including the pathologies observed during travel to the countries of destination as well as after the return home. Usually the major concern is HIV/AIDS; however, there are many other seemingly less life-threatening pathologies, such as psychological disorders, that must not be brushed aside by those involved in assisting this particular target group.

Folder 4. The theme of this folder is the various prevention activities to be realized in the countries of origin and destination, activities not to be confused with the information campaign. In the countries of origin, the prevention must focus both on primary action such as education, and tertiary action such as reintegration. As for the countries of destination, in order to help the victim liberate herself from slavery, secondary prevention must be emphasized first. This is punctuated with tertiary assistance to facilitate her reintegration in her country.

Folder 5. This folder addresses what we call "the help relationship," a very sensitive topic intended for those already working in education and therefore seasoned in the educational process. We have chosen to address the non-directive technique because it is based on guiding the assisted to find the intellectual – and sometimes spiritual – tools she needs to help herself. This can be possible with four steps – welcome, support, autonomy and empowerment. These steps focus on listening, mirroring and accompanying. It is, therefore, close to the word of the Gospels and the behavior of Jesus. To quote what a nun told me in Albania during the closing session (the best compliment ever received in my career), "thanks, because you helped me learn to turn the word into action".

Folder 6. This folder deals with Empowerment, as the natural outcome of the help relationship. In this session we illustrate how to help the trafficked individual or the potential migrants to regain her autonomy and sense of worth.

Folder 7. Lastly, we take a look at burn-out syndrome. As Sr. Eugenia reminded me, no matter what our calling, we may forget that we are persons of flesh and blood, with limits. We must be aware that a person – religious or not – experiencing burn-out – acknowledged or not – can't help anyone and, on the contrary, can actually hurt others.

After designing the folders, the third step was performing the training as envisaged by the project. Four training courses were organized: the first one in Italy, where the curricula was tested and validated by the participants. We then proceeded to Albania, Nigeria and Romania. In total 87 nuns were trained.

In all four countries the training revealed its elasticity and capacity to conform itself to the needs of the participants. For example, in Nigeria the 6th folder was profoundly discussed, while in Albania and in Romania the 4th folder was the most explored.

In a sum, the training acted as a simulation of the non-directive technique because it reorganized the nun's resources in order to cope with the problems of trafficking.

The course was able to empower them, because:

A) where feelings of isolation and powerlessness were prominent, they could be transformed to the realization that it is possible to be active in the effort to deal with trafficking and that in many ways they are already addressing the problem: for example, when they try to improve the dignity of women as already mentioned by Sr. Eugenia;

B) where the Nuns are already proactive, the course gave them the chance to sharpen their skills and work with their fellow sisters and stakeholders, to build up a network among them and reinforce the one already existing.

Personally, I have to admit that this has been one of my most rewarding experiences because it linked professionalism with the spirituality.

Working in the countries of origin brings with it the reality of trafficking in its most vivid light, where facing the problem means to acknowledge both economic and gender inequality. Trafficking is not born from the minds of inherently malicious individuals whose only aspiration is to harm and degrade women. Without excusing vile behavior, it is a phenomenon in which both victim and perpetrator are born from the same scourge of utter desperation. To assert that it is rooted only in the exploitation of poor countries and their labor force is to tell only part of the story. The other part concerns the lack of viable alternatives to meet the needs of the changing roles of women, who retain their role as caregivers while also assuming the role of financial providers.

Victims of trafficking cannot be blamed, as many people often do in our advanced countries. This is to violate them for a second time. We cannot forget that when trafficking involves sexual abuse, it becomes an even more severe exploitation made more abhorrent with its various forms of abuse and degradation toward a people whose low social profile keeps them out of sight and far from our minds.

To conclude: The trafficking phenomenon is a complex one indeed because it affects migration and economic policies on one hand, as well as global gender relationships on the other. Complex problems require equally varied solutions. For this reason the fusion of a professional approach with a spiritual one can more effectively meet the needs of the trafficked individual and address, at different levels of the societies, the complexities of the problem.

The Role of Faith-based Organizations in the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons

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When the poet Dante has passed, as a visitor, through the horrors of the Inferno and finally emerges, he says, with relief, “And we walked out again beneath the stars.” The evils of Dante’s Inferno, of a different time and a different age, are the universal bones that all of depraved humanity feeds upon. Essentially, the condemned in Dante’s Inferno have in some cataclysmic and destructive way failed to love. (In the severity of the eighth circle of the Inferno, they are punished for sins that approximate what we know today as human trafficking.)

What we are about here is the serious consideration of a contemporary inferno where people are trapped in the underground of another’s greed. Daily people are dehumanized, bought and sold and re-sold at whim. There is a distinct and logical place for faith-based organizations in this work against human trafficking.

The logic of lodging anti-trafficking work in faith-based organizations

1. Most faith-based organizations have philosophical and theological perspectives on justice that mandate action against human trafficking. For example, the themes prominent in the social teaching of the Catholic Church – human dignity, human rights and responsibilities, the call to family and community, option for the poor, the dignity of work and the rights of workers, solidarity and care for creation – all address evils inherent in human trafficking. These principles of justice are not unique to the Catholic Church; they are shared by most religions. Commitment to them gives to the issue of human trafficking an urgency that is bigger than politics.

2. Most faith-based organizations have national and international networks that enhance their capacity to give voice and volume to the cry for justice. They have access to a cross-section of agencies, each of which offers expertise and geography that expand the possibilities for outreach and service, an asset not to be underestimated.

3. Most faith-based organizations have staying power. They have history. They offer continuity, stability and permanence to the work, avoiding the frequent disruption that can come with smaller agencies that necessarily come and go with funding streams.

Ways faith-based organizations can combat human trafficking

1. Promote educations:

Once faith-based organizations have located the human trafficking issue within the framework of their fundamental commitment to justice and to human rights, they can

extend their awareness to their leadership, to their constituents, and to their associates. This requires an initial investment of personnel to study the issue, to understand it, and to deliver the message persuasively within the organization. Once the organization, or some significant segment of the organization, is convinced and educated, the potential for effective contribution is unlimited.

We at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops have discovered when it comes to human trafficking that education is wasted on no one. Our anti-trafficking work is located within Migration and Refugee Services at USCCB. We explore every opportunity to educate people, from brown bag lunches for staff to reports at the semi-annual meetings of the Bishops. When we extend our education on a large scale to the general public, we invite the regional Bishop to open the meetings with prayer and a statement of commitment to combat human trafficking. They are generous in their willingness to do this and their presence lends credibility to our concerns. It also enhances the image of the Church as an agent for change.

We educate our networks. In every general training program that Migration and Refugee Services provides for people who work at USCCB, whether it is individual training or a collective training of diocesan directors or resettlement office personnel, or children's specialists, we address the issue of human trafficking. Where relevant, we encourage our field offices and our associated agencies to engage in full-day training programs that we offer.

And we educate the general public. For example, using our Catholic network of women religious and the National Council of Catholic Women, we will educate 75 women leaders at a two-day training in July. These women were chosen for their capacity to deliver the message to Catholic dioceses and parishes throughout the country. In conjunction with Catholic Charities USA, we are launching a program whereby we will educate people in urban centers, shelters and jails, healthcare clinics, juvenile justice centers, transitional homes, and a host of other city places. In mid-May in Philadelphia, we sponsored an open forum for the general public. More than 200 people, from physicians to high school students, attended. Because of the connections we have across the country and across the world, we are able to facilitate a wide range of awareness programs.

It is important to note that all of our training and education is directed to one end: the best interest of victims. The U.S. federal law to protect victims, prevent trafficking, and prosecute perpetrators is a solid law, but because of the hidden nature of the trafficking trade, we have surfaced too few victims. Our education and training are intended to enable people to identify victims when they see them, and to empower them to act on what they see.

2. Provide services to victims

The matter of services to victims, a global need, is, nevertheless, directed by national norms. Where there is a law to protect victims of trafficking, or where there is overt adherence to the UN-recommended principles and guidelines on human rights and human trafficking, there is generally a framework for assisting victims.

Faith-based organizations, already persuaded by their own moral imperatives to address the dire needs of victims, can develop simple and creative ways to identify and serve victims. USCCB is able to do this under the auspices of the federal law, the Traf-

ficking Victims Protection Act, with the help of federal funds assigned to implement the law. In other parts of the world where there is not a national law, and therefore no government funding to assist with the project, different strategies are needed. So the method will differ from place to place, but the content of the need is fairly standard.

First, victims of trafficking need safety. Women religious in Italy have devised a method for networking with other agencies to provide safe houses. Similarly, USCCB has developed a system for short-term emergency housing where victims can be safe until they are assigned to a non-governmental organization to provide them with the services they are entitled to as persons. Our system for safe houses, also derived from the cooperation of women's religious communities, is very simple: both communities and individuals can commit to receiving a call when there is an emergency in their geographic area. If they cannot accommodate the need at the time, they advise and network with others who can. We have more than one hundred commitments from people who are glad to be able to participate in practical and possible ways in our efforts to combat trafficking.

Next, victims of trafficking need access to all the basic services available to refugees and other marginalized persons: shelter, food, healthcare, legal counsel, access to translation, education, language skills, etc. Where there is a federal budget to fund these needs as there is in the United States, faith-based organizations can manage those funds and call on their networks to provide service that is characterized by love, concern and quality care. At USCCB we have two federal grants to provide care for victims, and the likelihood of two more to care for victims before they have been officially certified by the government as such. With those grants we place both adults and children with our partners across the country. The partners do the case management; we provide direction, information, and an understanding of the issue, as well as funds to cover the expenses. Smaller organizations might do the case management themselves. Where there is not directly designated funding, victims remain in need of opportunities for basic human rights. Faith-based organizations can facilitate this work.

Finally, victims of human trafficking need compassion and wisdom. Often traumatized, beaten, brainwashed, deceived, used and abused, stripped of any semblance of dignity, they have a slow road to recovery. They need to be accompanied by people who understand human trafficking and who know the plight of the poor, people who respect their rights to choose their own futures. They, too, need to be allowed to walk freely beneath the stars.

3. Build coalitions

In *The Divine Comedy*, in the third circle of the *Inferno*, Dante places at the gates of hell those influential people who, in the face of great moral debate, remained neutral. Fortunately, among faith-based organizations there are not many whose members are neutral about the moral issue of human trafficking. A strong faith-based organization can provide leadership to those who share the values inherent in anti-trafficking work and thus promote the work. The best of our work at USCCB occurs within the framework of coalitions.

USCCB has organized a coalition of Catholic Organizations against Human Trafficking that meets quarterly. USCCB hosts it, staffs it, and together with a planning committee, draws up the agenda. In a position to make national contacts and to access key

government officials, USCCB can provide a framework in which other organizations can proffer their strengths and draw on the expertise of colleagues. Approximately 30 organizations belong, ranging from individual religious communities to the national Catholic Health Association. Members represent a range of works, from lobbying on Capitol Hill to teaching in universities. The Coalition is grounded in Catholic Social Teaching. Three things happen at each meeting: First, we further our education and exert our influence on policy by inviting key people, often government personnel from federal agencies, to spend time with us sharing their strategies to combat human trafficking. Second, since each organization is committed in its own way to dealing with the issue, we update ourselves on activities, and network effectively. Finally, we converge on some aspect of human trafficking that seems possible for us as a group. The value of the coalition is the ongoing education of its members, the sharing of resources, and the mutual commitment to action.

Hope As the Herald

I began with three reasons faith-based organizations are likely to be effective in anti-trafficking work (their commitment to justice, their access to networks, and their staying power), and moved on to three ways they can use their strengths to implement the work (by educating themselves and others, by providing services to victims, and by building coalitions). I will conclude with three reasons I think we can engage in hope as we pursue our efforts to eliminate human trafficking.

First of all, we are here. We are gathered in this room to focus on the issue, to learn, and to share our wisdom. Around the world there are groups who are “here.” The knowledge of human trafficking is spreading; more and more people are becoming educated to it. We are here. They are here. There is hope here.

Secondly, there is power and authority behind the message against human trafficking. Governments across the world are converging around this common cause. Where they are not, there is the constant and concrete reminder to them that this is, universally, a human rights issue. National and international media are addressing that. While there is no doubt that evil persists, and that, as Dante says, death has undone so many, especially in poor countries, we see progress, and, in many cases, funding to ensure the continuation of progress. There is hope.

And finally, there is that which is beyond all of us. There is hope in our capacity for prayer. Simplistic as it may sound to the sophisticate, God can do what we cannot do. God *will* do what we cannot do. We all have our prophets and our saints. In their struggles against injustice, they did not waste their lives. They did not simply visit the world. That is why they are prophets and saints. We are in good company.

The Demand: Where Sex Trafficking Begins

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The Trafficking Process: The Dynamics of Supply and Demand

The transnational sex trafficking of women and children is based on a balance between the supply of victims from sending countries and the demand for victims in receiving countries. Sending countries are those from which victims can be relatively easily recruited, usually with false promises of jobs. Receiving or destination countries are those with sex industries that create the demand for victims. Where prostitution is flourishing, pimps cannot recruit enough local women to fill up the brothels, so they have to bring in victims from other places.

Until recently, the supply side of trafficking and the conditions in sending countries have received most of the attention of researchers, NGOs, and policy makers, and little attention was paid to the demand side of trafficking.

The trafficking process begins with the demand for women to be used in prostitution. It begins when pimps place orders for women. Interviews I have done with pimps and police from organized crime units say that when pimps need new women and girls, they contact someone who can deliver them. This is what initiates the chain of events of sex trafficking.

The crucial factor in determining where trafficking will occur is the presence and activity of traffickers, pimps, and collaborating officials running criminal operations. Poverty, unemployment, and lack of opportunities are compelling factors that facilitate the ease with which traffickers recruit women, but they are not the cause of trafficking. Many regions of the world are poor and chaotic, but not every region becomes a center for the recruitment or exploitation of women and children. Trafficking occurs because criminals take advantage of poverty, unemployment, and a desire for better opportunities.

Corruption of government officials and police is necessary for trafficking and exploitation of large numbers of women and children. In sending countries, large-scale operations require the collaboration of officials to obtain travel documents and facilitate the exit of women from the country.

In destination countries, corruption is an enabler for prostitution and trafficking. The operation of brothels requires the collaboration of officials and police, who must be willing to ignore or work with pimps and traffickers. Prostitution operations depend on attracting men. Pimps and brothel owners have to advertise to men that women and children are available for commercial sex acts. Officials have to ignore this blatant advertising.

Components of the Demand

There are four components that make-up the demand: 1) the men who buy commercial sex acts, 2) the exploiters who make up the sex industry, 3) the states that are destination countries, and 4) the culture that tolerates or promotes sexual exploitation.

The Men

The men, the buyers of commercial sex acts, are the ultimate consumers of trafficked and prostituted women and children. They use them for entertainment, sexual gratification, and acts of violence. It is men who create the demand, and women and children who are the supply.

I recently completed a report for the Trafficking in Persons Office, U.S. Department of State on the demand side of sex trafficking that focuses on the men who purchase sex acts. Typically, when prostitution and sex trafficking are discussed, the focus is on the women. The men who purchase the sex acts are faceless and nameless.

Research on men who purchase sex acts has found that many of the assumptions we make about them are myths. Seldom are the men lonely or have sexually unsatisfying relationships. In fact, men who purchase sex acts are more likely to have more sexual partners than those who do not purchase sex acts. They often report that they are satisfied with their wives or partners. They say that they are searching for more – sex acts that their wives will not do or excitement that comes with the hunt for a woman they can buy for a short time. They are seeking sex without relationship responsibilities. A significant number of men say that the sex and interaction with the prostitute were unrewarding and they did not get what they were seeking; yet they compulsively repeat the act of buying sex. Researchers conclude that men are purchasing sex acts to meet emotional needs, not physical needs.

Men who purchase sex acts do not respect women, nor do they want to respect women. They are seeking control and sex in contexts in which they are not required to be polite or nice, and where they can humiliate, degrade, and hurt the woman or child, if they want.

The Exploiters

The exploiters, including traffickers, pimps, brothel owners, organized crime members, and corrupt officials make up what is known as the sex industry. They make money from the sale of sex as a commodity. Traffickers and organized crime groups are the perpetrators that have received most of the attention in discussions about the sex trafficking.

The State

By tolerating or legalizing prostitution, the state, at least passively, is contributing to the demand for victims. The more states regulate prostitution and derive tax revenue from it, the more actively they become part of the demand for victims.

If we consider that the demand is the driving force of trafficking, then it is important to analyze the destination countries' laws and policies. Officials in destination countries do not want to admit responsibility for the problem of sex trafficking or be held account-

table for creating the demand. At this point to a great extent, the wealthier destination countries control the debate on how trafficking and prostitution will be addressed. Sending countries are usually poorer, less powerful, and more likely to be influenced by corrupt officials and/or organized crime groups. They lack the power and the political will to insist that destination countries stop their demand for women for prostitution.

In destination countries, strategies are devised to protect the sex industries that generate hundreds of millions of dollars per year for the state where prostitution is legal, or for organized crime groups and corrupt officials where the sex industry is illegal.

In the destination countries, exploiters exert pressure on the lawmakers and officials to create conditions that allow them to operate. They use power and influence to shape laws and policies that maintain the flow of women to their sex industries. They do this through the normalization of prostitution and the corruption of civil society.

There has been a global movement to normalize and legalize the flow of foreign women into sex industries. It involves a shift from opposing the exploitation of women in prostitution to only opposing the worst violence and criminality. It involves redefining prostitution as “sex work,” a form of labor for poor women, and redefining the transnational movement of women for prostitution as labor migration, called “migrant sex work.” It involves legalizing prostitution, and changing the migration laws to allow a flow of women for prostitution from sending regions to sex industry centers. The normalization of prostitution is often recommended as a way to solve the problem of trafficking.

States protect their sex industries by preventing resistance to the flow of women to destination countries by silencing the voice of civil society. In many sending countries, civil society is weak and undeveloped. Governments of destination countries fund non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in sending countries to promote the destination country’s views on prostitution and trafficking. Authentic voices of citizens who do not want their daughters and sisters to become “sex workers” in other countries are replaced by the voice of the destination country, which says that prostitution is good work for women. The result is a corruption of civil society.

In a number of countries, the largest anti-trafficking organizations are funded by states that have legalized prostitution. These funded NGOs often support legalized prostitution. They only speak about “forced prostitution” and movement of women by force, fraud, or coercion. They remain silent as thousands of victims leave their communities for “sex work” in destination countries. Effectively, these NGOs have abandoned the women and girls to the pimps and men who purchase sex acts.

When prostitution is illegal, but thriving, government officials often look jealously at the money being made by criminals, and think they are not getting their share. In countries that are considering the legalization of prostitution, the estimated amount of the future tax revenue is often used to argue for legalization.

Germany legalized brothels and prostitution in 2002. German lawmakers thought they were going to get hundreds of millions of euros in tax revenue. But the newly redefined “business owners” and “freelance staff” in brothels have not been turned into taxpayers. The Federal Audit Office estimates that the government has lost hundreds of millions of euros in unpaid tax revenue from the sex industry. Recently, lawmakers started to look for ways to increase collection of taxes from prostitutes. The state seems to be taking on the role of pimp by harassing prostitutes for not giving them enough money.

Although legalization has resulted in big legal profits for a few, other expected benefits have not materialized. Organized crime groups continue to traffic women and children and run illegal prostitution operations along side the legal businesses. Legalization has not reduced prostitution or trafficking; in fact, both activities increase as a result of men being able to legally buy sex acts and cities attracting foreign male sex tourists.

The promised benefits of legalization for women have not materialized in Germany or the Netherlands. In Germany, legalization was supposed to enable women to get health insurance and retirement benefits, and enable them to join unions, but few women have signed up for benefits or for unions. The reason has to do with the basic nature of prostitution. It is not work; it is not a job like any other. It is abuse and exploitation that women only engage in if forced to or when they have no other options. Even where prostitution is legal, a significant proportion of the women in brothels are trafficked. Women and children controlled by criminals cannot register with an authority or join a union. Women who are making a more or less free choice to be in prostitution do so out of immediate necessity – debt, unemployment, and poverty. They consider resorting to prostitution as a temporary means of making money, and assume as soon as a debt is paid or a certain sum of money is earned for poverty-stricken families, they will go home. They seldom tell friends or relatives how they earn money. They do not want to register with authorities and create a permanent record of being a prostitute.

The Culture

The culture, particular mass media, is playing a large role in normalizing prostitution by portraying prostitution as glamorous or a way to quickly make a lot of money. Within academia, “sex workers” are represented as being empowered, independent, liberated women.

To counter these harmful messages, there is an important role for churches to play in describing the harm of prostitution to women, children, families, and communities. In the United States, the Evangelical Christian churches are increasingly involved in the human rights struggle against sex trafficking and exploitation.

Unfortunately, in the battle against the global sex trade, the voice of moral authority that condemns all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse is being lost. Some churches are compromising on their mission and their vision. For example, in the Czech Republic, there is a government proposal to legalize and regulate prostitution, as a way to combat trafficking. Catholic Bishop Vaclav Maly, the Auxiliary Bishop of Prague, has made a statement in favor of legalization of prostitution. According to a *Radio Praha* report in April 2002, he has given up the moral battle saying, “The chances of eliminating it are practically nil. ... Under those circumstances, it is better to keep it in check and under control by giving it a legal framework. This is not to say that I approve of brothels – but it seems to me that it would be better to have prostitution take place there – with medical checks-ups and prostitutes paying taxes. It would be the lesser of two evils.”

More recently, Bishop Maly has been silent in the legalization debate in Czech Republic, but his original statement is posted on web sites supporting legalization, which gives the impression that the Catholic Church supports legalization. A voice of moral authority in support of human dignity and against the sexual exploitation and abuse of victims of prostitution and trafficking is needed in the Czech Republic. Bishop Maly could be this voice. He has a long history of supporting human rights. He was an original signer and spokesman for Charter 77, the petition calling for the communist gover-

nment of Czechoslovakia to comply with international human rights agreements they had signed. He knows the importance of resisting abusive power and laws that enslave people instead of freeing them.

Faith communities, from the grassroots to the leadership, need to use their voice of authority to combat the increasing sexual exploitation of victims and its normalization.

Abolitionist Movement

There is a growing abolitionist movement around the world that seeks to provide assistance to victims and hold perpetrators accountable.

In Sweden, beginning in 1999, the purchasing of sexual services became a crime. The new law was passed as part of a new violence against women act that broadened the activities that qualified as criminal acts of violence. With this new approach, prostitution is considered to be one of the most serious expressions of the oppression of and discrimination against women.” The focus of the law is on “the demand” or the behavior of the purchasers of sex acts not the women.

The U.S. government has adopted an abolitionist approach at the federal level. In 2003, President George W. Bush issued a National Security Presidential Directive. It was the first U.S. opinion on the link between prostitution and trafficking: “Prostitution and related activities, which are inherently harmful and dehumanizing, contribute to the phenomenon of trafficking in persons...” This policy statement is important because it connects trafficking to prostitution and states that prostitution is harmful. This policy goes against attempts to de-link prostitution and trafficking and redefine prostitution as a form of work for women.

As a result of this abolitionist approach, more attention is being focused on the demand side of sex trafficking. Destination countries, particularly those that legalize prostitution, are coming under new scrutiny.

Conclusion

I believe that only by going to the root causes, which are corruption and the demand in destination countries, will we end the trafficking of women and children.

We need to urge all governments, NGOs, and faith communities to focus on reducing the demand for victims of sex trafficking and prostitution. All the components of the demand need to be penalized – the men who purchase sex acts, the traffickers, the pimps, and others who profit, states that fund deceptive messages and act as pimp, and the culture that lies about the nature of prostitution.

We could greatly reduce the number of victims, if the demand for them was penalized. If there were no men seeking to buy sex acts, no women and children would be bought and sold. If there were no brothels waiting for victims, no victims would be recruited. If there were no states that profited from the sex trade, there would be no regulations that facilitated the flow of women from poor towns to wealthier sex industry centers. If there were no false messages about prostitution, no women or girls would be deceived into thinking prostitution is a glamorous or legitimate job.

A Call to Action: Joining the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons

Dorchen A. Leidholdt

Coalition Against Trafficking in Women

There is one and only one explanation for the stunning and devastating escalation over the past two decades of sex trafficking: the demand created by men with the means to purchase the body of a woman or child. These men are our fathers, brothers, husbands, and sons. They live in our communities. They attend our churches, synagogues, temples, and mosques. Most consider themselves to be good family men. Indeed research shows that the typical sex exploiter is a married, employed man with children. Few consider themselves serial sexual predators – although that, in fact, is what they are. Even fewer regard what they inflict on the women and children they use as casually as spittoons or urinals as rape – although that is precisely how their victims experience it.

Advances in technology and globalization have given demand scope and reach and multiplied it by the thousands. Western businessmen who once limited their purchase of female flesh to women in local brothels now jet into Bangkok, Dakar, and Recife to consume more exotic and youthful specimens, their quest aided by information readily available on the internet. But it's not only sex tourists who prey on poor women and children from poor countries. The demand in wealthy countries for young, exotic flesh, fueled by the internet and intensified by the diminishing supply of native-born young women, whose education and employment shields them from sexual exploitation, has led to a explosion in the numbers of women and girls who are flown from poor countries into the sex industry centers of wealthy countries in the North and West. Many of these women and girls are promised jobs as babysitters and receptionists, only to find themselves on their backs in tiny rooms with mirrored ceilings steeling themselves as they are invaded by one sweaty, grunting buyer after the other. Many victims were in prostitution in their home countries; already broken, they are easy prey for the international sex merchants and the buyers they serve.

How is it possible for otherwise upstanding members of our communities to systematically and unthinkingly engage in acts that exploit and injure the most marginalized and wounded among us? The answer is clear: because we have failed to challenge and explode the deep-seated beliefs and traditions – in reality, myths and lies – that justify the purchase and consumption of women's and children's bodies.

The first is the myth of the male sexual imperative: men have “certain needs” and boys will be boys. This myth is handed down to boys from men who take their sons to brothels to have their first sexual experience, a tradition in many countries. Another group of fathers cites these purported needs in order to defend the establishment and maintenance of prostitution camps outside of military bases for the “rest and recreation” of soldiers. There young men – some still boys – are taught unforgettable lessons about women and sexuality through their sexual exploitation of women and girls of another, “inferior” race and social class.

Coming from a military family, I am personally familiar with this manifestation of demand. My father, who retired decades ago as a Commander in the U.S. Navy, recounted his experiences as a young petty officer patrolling the red light district in a Middle Eastern country to ensure the orderly transaction of business between American servicemen and the brothels they patronized. My older brother, serving in Vietnam, was handed a condom as he disembarked from his ship docked outside Olongapo, a sex industry center in the Philippines. The message was clear: have a good time but don't contract a disease. Years later, when I visited Buklod, a support group in Olongapo for the impoverished former prostitutes, most with Amerasian children, I was consumed with feelings of sorrow and shame.

Demand is justified by the division of the female sex into good women and bad women, mothers and whores. "Good women" nurture families in relationships sanctified by marriage; "bad women" are bought and sold, used and discarded. The problem with this dichotomy is that the real distinction between these two categories isn't vice and virtue; it's protection and exploitation. "Good women" were girls who were supported by their families and shielded from sexual abuse. "Bad women" were denied that protection and left vulnerable to future sexual predation. Researchers tell us that between 70 and 90 percent of women in prostitution have histories of sexual molestation in childhood. The French abolitionist group *Mouvement Le Cri* has a slogan that says it all: "In every whore there is a little girl assassinated."

Demand is supported by those hackneyed expressions that, all evidence to the contrary, people embrace and believe in. "Prostitution is a victimless crime." "Prostitution is the world's oldest profession." Demand ignores the physical evidence of harm – whether it is the bruises and track marks or the pimp lurking around the corner or the fact that the girl whose body he purchases can't speak his language. Demand ignores the social science data: the research showing that people who have been prostituted suffer astronomically high degrees of post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, suicidal ideations and attempts; the research showing that prostitution destroys victims' reproductive systems; and the criminal justice data demonstrating that, far more frequently than any other group of people, prostitutes are subjected to rape, battering, and homicide. Instead, demand sees what it wants to see – pleasure, freedom, and work.

Demand requires a willful blindness to the sexual abuse of children: "She looked 18." "Children in that part of the world mature early." "You're less likely to get AIDS from a child." Demand is driving the age of entry into prostitution lower and lower, from 16 to 14 to 12.

Demand embodies a value system, promoted by pornography and the media that regards sex as an act of consumption and women and children as commodities to be consumed. The value system of demand seeps out of the brothel and strip club into the rest of society, coloring the way husbands treat their wives and daughters, bosses treat female employees, and men and boys treat the women and girls they encounter on the street. In short, the value system of demand fosters sex harassment and inequality.

You may have noticed that I talk about the demand for sex trafficking and the demand for prostitution as the same phenomenon. Indeed it is impossible to do otherwise. Anti-sex industry activists from Norway urge us to direct our attention to the buyer, the bought, and the business. When we do so, we see that distinctions between sex trafficking and prostitution fail to withstand scrutiny. Men don't walk into a brothel and ask for a trafficked woman. Sex industry buyers use trafficked and domestically prostituted

women interchangeably just as, as ECPAT studies have demonstrated, they use adults and minors interchangeably. As for the business, recent raids on brothels in the United States, Australia, and Europe reveal that sex industry businesses have trafficked and domestically prostituted women “working” side by side. Indeed, women and girls are often trafficked into same brothels, strip clubs, and escort services that sell local women and girls to local men.

And the bought? Trafficked and domestically prostituted women have much in common: histories of physical and sexual abuse in childhood, the absence of family support, status as racial or ethnic minorities, and, above all, grinding poverty. Once brought into the sex industry – an empire ruled by sex industry entrepreneurs through brainwashing and coercion – trafficked and domestically prostituted women are subjected to the same brutal treatment and suffer the same physical and psychological trauma. Like prisoners of war who are tortured, both trafficked and domestically prostituted women attempt to survive through dissociation and compliance with their captors’ demands.

There has been a move afoot over the last fifteen years to separate trafficking from prostitution. I first became aware of it in 1991 when I attended a conference on sex trafficking in Strasbourg, France, jointly sponsored by the government of the Netherlands and the Council of Europe. Participants were instructed at the outset that since the subject of the conference was trafficking we were not permitted to raise the issue of prostitution, which we were told would only engender controversy. Many of us were dumbstruck by the restriction and refused to abide by it. Since then it has become clear that the attempt to censor a critique of prostitution was politically motivated. The Dutch government was moving toward the legalization of brothels and the regulation of prostitution as work. Linking prostitution and trafficking interfered with this agenda.

Many well-intentioned individuals and governments have advocated the legalization of prostitution as a way to protect women in the sex industry and eliminate organized crime. Recently, with these ends in mind, New Zealand legalized prostitution. Faced with an explosion of trafficking in the Czech Republic, the auxiliary archbishop of Prague has supported a draft bill that would legalize prostitution, in that sex-trade-riden country.

If sex trafficking were unrelated to prostitution, and prostitution caused no harm, directing criminal sanctions against sex traffickers while legalizing prostitution might make sense. But the experience of the Netherlands and other jurisdictions that have legalized prostitution demonstrates the foolishness of this approach. By legalizing prostitution, governments confer legitimacy on the sex industry, removing obstacles to its doing business. Invariably, the number of sex businesses grows, as does the demand for prostitution. Legalized prostitution brings sex tourists. Local women can’t meet the demand, so foreign girls and women are trafficked in. The trafficked women are cheaper, younger, and easier to control. More trafficked women means more local demand and more sex tourism. Meanwhile the sex industry, reaping more profits daily, hires lawyers and lobbyists to promote laws and policies that advance its interests and strengthen its influence.

Sheila Jeffries, a professor at the University of Melbourne, documents these phenomena in Victoria, Australia. In 1994 prostitution was legalized in Victoria. The hope was that legal prostitution would curtail organized crime and trafficking. What in fact happened was a massive expansion of Victoria’s sex industry and an increase in sex trafficking into Victoria. The number of legal brothels escalated from 40 to 64; the number

of escort agencies proliferated; the illegal sex businesses soon outstripped the legal ones; and the incidence of sex trafficking increased dramatically. Soon a Melbourne businessman was arrested for bringing in dozens of Thai women as contract workers and then confiscating their passports until they worked off their debt. A legal brothel was busted for holding Asian prostitutes in indentured servitude. Jeffries observes, "Legalization was intended to eliminate organized crime from the sex industry. In fact, the reverse has happened. Legalization has brought with it an explosion in the trafficking of women."

The desire to separate sex trafficking from prostitution is understandable. Although it has existed for centuries, sex trafficking seems like an extreme, recent, and external phenomenon, an invader who can be thwarted by a crackdown on foreign criminal enterprises. Prostitution by contrast, has been around, it seems, forever. It is part of the fabric of our societies and, in large part, is ignored by our criminal justice systems. Taking on prostitution is a task much more difficult than merely passing new laws and directing their enforcement. It means undertaking the painful, conflictual work of confronting the values and actions of our own citizens and institutions; of looking deeply and unflinchingly within.

In the mid 1990s, the government of Sweden found itself in an unsettling position. So committed to gender equality that it has a separate ministry devoted to advancing that goal, Sweden was awash in gender inequality at its most extreme. Bordering Eastern Europe, Sweden had become a major destination point for young women and girls who, in rapidly escalating numbers, were being trafficked across its borders and into its local brothels and strip clubs. Evaluating the situation, Sweden realized that desperate impoverished young women and criminal enterprises comprised only part of the equation. Of pivotal importance was demand created by Swedish men whose payments for prostitution made trafficking into Sweden a lucrative activity. The government rightly concluded that these were the people who should be held accountable and sanctioned, not the impoverished women and girls being sold and brutalized. Following this reasoning, Sweden promulgated a set of laws to combat prostitution as a form of violence against women. They eliminated criminal penalties against women and girls in prostitution and funded services to them; directed strong penalties against pimps, brothel owners, and traffickers; and, most important, demanded the arrest and prosecution of buyers. At the same time, Sweden initiated an intensive public education campaign against the demand for trafficking and prostitution by targeting prostitution customers with the slogan, "Buying sex is a crime." The result was a dramatic decrease in the incidence of prostitution and a significant decline in sex trafficking into Sweden. The danger of prosecution coupled with the diminished demand made Sweden hostile territory for global sex traffickers.

Ironically, the demand that fuels prostitution and sex trafficking is also our best hope for stopping the global sex trade. As the government of Sweden has shown, while demand is essential to sex industry success, it also represents the weak link in the sex industry chain. Unlike prostituted women and children, prostitution buyers do have choices to make. And when they see that choosing to buy women devastates lives and threatens their own freedom and social standing, they make different ones.

Sweden has demonstrated that with political will governments can curtail sex trafficking. And when religious leaders and congregants help lead the fight and spread the word we can instill in our societies zero tolerance for prostitution. I'd like to conclude

with the eloquent words of one such religious leader, Archbishop Francesco Ruffini of Lecce, who on October 23, 2000 spoke out against a proposal to legalize brothels in Italy: “As men and as Christians, we do not, nor will we ever, approve the proposal... as men, because women are not merchandise to be paid for, according to the will of the clients; as Christians, because we know very well not only that the prostitutes will precede us in the Kingdom of Heaven, but also because these poor women cannot only be redeemed but are, in fact, redeemed when they find a friendly hand.”

Morning Session Summary Remarks

As prepared for delivery by

Ambassador Jim Nicholson

We've seen this morning that the fight against human trafficking calls for a multi-faceted strategy. Sister Eugenia and Stefano Volpicelli have shown us the powerful role that can be played by religious women in the fight against trafficking. Faith-based communities are key elements for prevention, rescue and rehabilitation work. The program they presented has been hugely successful. My hope is that we can spread this program as widely as possible. Already we've had encouraging expressions of interest by nuncios and representatives of bishops' conferences and religious orders. The program has gone through a pilot phase here in Rome, in Nigeria, Albania and Romania. Spreading the program further a field – into Asia and Latin America – is going to require financial backing from new sponsors and supporters.

If I can address my fellow diplomats directly for a moment – I'm asking for your help. My Embassy has already secured funding for anti-trafficking projects to the tune of \$160,000 in the past three years. I appreciated the contribution from the Taiwanese Embassy to the Holy See for an anti-trafficking project in Albania. I'd like to see more embassies working with their Ministries of Foreign Affairs to secure funding for anti-trafficking projects – especially if the projects involve the Holy See or Catholic NGOs. The International Organization for Migration's regional office here in Rome, along with the Italian Union of Major Superiors and the International Union of Superiors General has prepared some new project proposals. This is an opportunity to put our resources where they can do the most good – to free people from slavery and to put the slave traders out of business. Please give your consideration to supporting these projects and let me or my staff know if you would like to take part.

If we are going to win the fight against this new form of slavery then nations too will need to form new and diverse partnerships. My country is reaching out to other countries in a number of important ways:

- The State Department is working extensively with governments on action plans for prevention, protection of victims, and prosecution. We've just released our *2004 Trafficking in Persons Report*. There's a handout you can pick up later with details on how to access the report on the internet.
- Congress in 2003 strengthened anti-trafficking legislation and provided more than \$70 million in funding worldwide to end this slavery. The U.S. is providing money around the world for:
 - ✓ Rehabilitation and vocational training centers for victims
 - ✓ Special housing shelters
 - ✓ Law enforcement training and legal reform assistance
 - ✓ Information and awareness campaigns – such as this conference
 - ✓ Voluntary repatriation for displaced victims

- ✓ Training for migration officials, medical personnel and social workers
- ✓ Combating sex tourism
- ✓ And rescuing victims for slave-like institutions.

However, there is much more to be done – together – to deal with this issue, which is both important and urgent. Governments need to take action to step up their anti-trafficking efforts. There is a critical need for increased rescues of trafficking victims and prosecutions of traffickers. People freed from slavery must be treated as victims of crime, not criminals. The demand for modern-day slaves must be stopped. This is not a victimless or harmless crime, and the public must be informed of the risks and consequences it carries for our societies and, most importantly, for the victims of human trafficking.

A Call to Action: Joining the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons

Comments by Sylvia Poggioli

Senior European Correspondent National Public Radio (NPR)

The sex slave trade is the third largest moneymaking venture in the world, after illegal weapons and drugs – a multi-billion dollar business. A United Nations report in 2002, called human trafficking the fastest-growing transnational organized criminal activity and a major violation of human rights.

According to the U.S. State Department, 600,000 – 800,000 people, mostly women and children, fall victim to human traffickers every year around the world.

The State Department document underscores that, among a group of 23 countries where human trafficking occurs most frequently, there are regions where there is a massive international military and civilian presence – for example, Bosnia and the United Nations protectorate of Kosovo.

Police and NGOs succeed in bringing to court only a few cases that they admit are the tip of the iceberg.

I will focus on the region I know best, East-Central Europe and the Balkans.

According to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, up to 200,000 women are bartered in the Balkan region alone. Every year, it is estimated that half a million women are forcibly prostituting themselves at any given time in Western Europe.

The international bazaar of women has been around for a long time. Sex tourism has been flourishing in Southeast Asia for decades. But what is new is the size and scope of the contemporary sex slave trade. The new wave comes from East and Central Europe – a side effect of the economic upheaval and social chaos unleashed by the sudden fall of communist regimes.

It is a climate in which criminals find it easy to dupe desperately poor young women into the sex trade.

Last year, the United Nations named Prague, the capital the Czech republic, the hub of the sex slave trade in Europe. Prague has hundreds of brothels that make it a favorite destination of west European sex tourists. It is also a staging post where women are held captive and displayed for sale to buyers before being shipped into Western Europe.

The country's entry into the European Union last month and the removal of border controls are expected to lead to a huge rise in human trafficking.

The so-called Natashas have been lured and smuggled to all corners of the earth. At nighttime, the back streets of cities in Europe, North America, Australia and Japan are filled with Monikas, Irinas, Mimosas, and Ljubas – wearing provocative micro-skirts and teetering on stiletto heels. Some are as young as 13. Interrupted children.

For the clients, they're interchangeable commodities to be used for sexual gratification. For the slave traders, they're perishable goods, to be consumed fully before they spoil. This market is insatiable, in constant need of new supplies.

Profits are immense. A pimp who buys a woman for 10,000 dollars can recover his investment in just one week, after that it's pure gain.

According to Europol, the European union police agency, organized crime groups are creating cartels to control all aspects of the trade, from recruitment to final exploitation, because the trade has become an immense source of wealth. By eliminating middlemen, the criminal cartels have streamlined the sex industry and made it even more impenetrable to law enforcement.

Before coming here today, I did a LEXIS-NEXIS search on recent articles on human trafficking and the sex slave trade and I came up with dozens of articles – but all of them were in the western media.

In fact, in Eastern and Central Europe – the source of the new wave of global human trafficking – this is the great under-reported story. And the main reason is that it is simply too dangerous to touch.

It's almost impossible for a reporter to penetrate the inner workings of the sex-slave industry; that would mean penetrating the Albanian, Serbian, Russian and other mafias that are only too ready to kill anyone to protect their business.

I have spoken to many reporters in the Balkan region who told me that too often local officials are directly involved in human trafficking and sex slavery. One of the most notorious cases was in Montenegro where the government failed to prosecute government officials – in particular the Deputy State Prosecutor – involved in trafficking.

Another problem is that despite pressure from Western countries, most Balkan governments have done little to ensure protection of victims, which means that very few women – once freed – will testify against their pimps.

Several international journalist organizations are trying to help train Balkan reporters in investigative journalism. One training project is run by the NPR affiliate in Boston, WBUR, which is bringing Albanian reporters to the U.S. But even with the best American training, many reporters have told me they simply do not feel safe enough to cover this story.

I, too, have encountered just how difficult this story is to cover. I was not threatened by anyone here in Italy, but I came up against the wall of fear and reluctance of victims – even those who had the courage to escape from their tormentors. These women fear not only for their own lives, but also for those of their parents and the children they may have left at home.

Yet another problem, which has gotten little media coverage even in the West, is that UN peacekeeping operations in the Balkans are fueling the local sex industry, often involving abducted women. When I've asked UN officials about this, they've brushed it off, saying brothels have existed near military encampments since ancient times.

Several European countries still don't have legislation against modern forms of slavery – or they are not forcefully implementing these laws.

One major problem is that many countries treat the victims of sex slavery not as such, but lump them with illegal immigrants, often deporting them home where they are often rejected by their families and the vicious cycle starts over again.

Several countries have created special anti-human trafficking police units, but as often happens in other fields, international cooperation is very weak. And, as happens in Germany, sentences against human traffickers are often mild or suspended.

The U.S. State Department report on human trafficking issued just two days ago gave Italy high marks for its treatment of victims through protection programs and for support services for trafficked women.

But it recommended that the government focus on education campaigns within Italy to address the growing demand. In contrast, the report cited Spain – or more correctly the city of Madrid – for its demand-reduction strategy, which focuses both on the responsibility of clients and the rights of victims.

One issue the media rarely sheds light on is who are the consumers of the sex industry. And why is demand so huge in western societies?

It sometimes seems that the old mindset – that prostitution is the oldest profession in the world and therefore part of the social landscape – is impossible to shake.

Yes, prostitution has always existed as a sordid sideline of history.

But never has the scope of the sex industry been so vast, so violent, and so brutal as it is today. And through the control of transnational organized crime groups, human trafficking and the sex slave trade pose huge challenges to the law enforcement and legislative capacities of fledgling democracies.

I think this is one area where journalists have an important role to play.

I think media information on this subject must be systematic and continuous to make public opinion aware of this vicious plague and to force governments to tackle more forcefully the problem of reducing demand and of focusing on the responsibility of clients.

I'd like to cite one example where the media helped raise public awareness and change policy.

During the war in Bosnia, there were many women journalists and I have often been asked whether that had an effect on the coverage of the war.

And I think on one issue it did, on rape.

The presence of so many women reporters in Bosnia helped destroy the myth that rape in war was business as usual. For centuries, rape had always been treated as a sort of sideshow in wars. I think our reporting showed that systematic sexual abuse of women was a central part of the specific strategy of ethnic cleansing done in the name of national and ethnic supremacy, and to humiliate and destroy the family structure in the rival-enemy community.

And I think that kind of reporting – and the fact that rape in Bosnia was given so much coverage – helped raise international consciousness and now rape is officially listed as a war crime at the Hague tribunal for crimes in the former Yugoslavia.

Most of all, I think, international journalist organizations should try to establish strong links with local media in the source countries in order to help them inform their readers, listeners, and viewers not only on the dangers young women face when they are lured to the west but also to demystify the glamour and riches they believe they will find in western societies.

I'd like to share an anecdote with you: I once interviewed an Albanian woman who wanted to flee to Italy. She thought she knew everything about the country from watching Italian TV by satellite. I tried to tell her it would not be easy for her to find a job. She dismissed my advice, saying what do you mean? In Italy cats eat off silver dishes.

I thought about it for a second and then realized she was right: she had seen an Italian TV ad for cat food... and she thought that it reflected reality.

Afternoon Session Summary Remarks

As prepared for delivery by

Ambassador Jim Nicholson

Thank you to our presenters and moderator this afternoon. Some of the images you saw during the film at lunchtime and during the media session may have disturbed you. That's good. The images and stories did not pull any punches. Trafficking is a dirty, evil, horrendous, brutal business. It serves no purpose to sanitize it in order to protect our sensibilities. I hope that the images you saw will stimulate you to further action; first at a personal level, and then at an institutional or governmental level.

If you'll allow me to quote again from Secretary of State Colin Powell's introduction to the *2004 Trafficking in Persons Report* released on Monday: "Many international covenants and national laws condemn and outlaw trafficking. And that's important. And that's good. But agreements and laws have to be honored and enforced if they are to make any difference."

All of us are called to work together to close down trafficking routes, prosecute and convict traffickers, and protect and reintegrate victims back into society. We ask no less of destination countries than we do of sending countries; if anything, we ask more of them. All nations, too, must redouble their efforts to prevent people from being lured into trafficking in the first place.

Clearly, and we all understand this, the underlying sources of trafficking are deep. In many societies, there is a lack of basic respect and economic opportunity for women. Civil strife and corruption drive people to desperation and into the clutches of traffickers. Racism plays its part as well. Clearly, these evils won't be uprooted in a day, but we have reason to be optimistic. Our optimism is boosted by events such as our gathering here today – people of good will who see a problem and who are willing to do something about it.

I want to thank everyone who participated today, especially those who organized the event. Before we begin our reception, I'd like to present a token of our appreciation to the speakers and moderators who did such a splendid job of putting into focus the role of faith-based communities in anti-trafficking work, of delving into the demand side of the problem, and showing us how the media can be a powerful ally in the fight to end 21st century slavery.